

Illinois U Library

OCTOBER 10, 1946

Town Meeting



BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

BROADCAST BY STATIONS OF THE AMERICAN BROADCASTING CO.



What Basic Questions Divide Russia and the United States?

Moderator, GEORGE V. DENNY, JR.

Speakers

GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT

ROBERT ST. JOHN

Interrogators

HOWARD VINCENT O'BRIEN

FRANK SMOTHERS

(See also page 12)

COMING

—October 17, 1946—

Is the American Press Really Free?

—October 24, 1946—

**Should the Present OPA Be Abolished
or Revised?**

Published by THE TOWN HALL, Inc., New York 18, N. Y.

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 24



\$4.50 A YEAR : 10c A COPY



CONTENTS



The account of the meeting reported in this Bulletin was transcribed from recordings made of the actual broadcast and represents the exact content of the meeting as nearly as such mechanism permits. The publishers and printer are not responsible for the statements of the speakers or the points of view presented.

THE BROADCAST OF OCTOBER 10:

"What Basic Questions Divide Russia and the United States?"

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Mr. DENNY | 3 |
| Mr. ST. JOHN | 4 |
| Major ELIOT | 8 |
| Mr. O'BRIEN | 11 |
| THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN | 12 |
| Mr. SMOTHERS | 15 |
| QUESTIONS, PLEASE! | 18 |

THE BROADCAST OF OCTOBER 17:

"Is the American Press Really Free?"

THE BROADCAST OF OCTOBER 24:

"Should the Present OPA Be Abolished or Revised?"

The Broadcast of October 10, 1946, originated in Battle Creek, Michigan, from 8:30 to 9:30, E.S.T., over the American Broadcasting Company Network

Town Meeting is published by The Town Hall, Inc., Town Meeting Publication Office: 400 S. Front St., Columbus 15, Ohio. Send subscriptions and single copy orders to Town Hall, 123 West 43rd St., New York 18, N.Y. Subscription price, \$4.50 a year, 10c a copy. Entered as second-class matter, May 9, 1942, at the Post Office at Columbus, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Illinois U Library *Town Meeting*



BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

GEORGE V. DENNY, JR., MODERATOR



OCTOBER 10, 1946

VOLUME 12, No. 24

What Basic Questions Divide Russia and the United States?

Announcer:

Yes, friends, it's Town Meeting time again and the World-at-Our-Door Committee of the Battle Creek public schools system welcomes you to the food health capital of America.

This nationally famous health city is also the home of the Percy Jones United States Army Hospital for the Physically Handicapped. It is most appropriate that this broadcast should originate here this particular week, for this has been proclaimed by the President of the United States as the National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.

The Percy Jones Hospital is the largest of the United States Army General Hospitals and is doing the most extensive work to train the physically handicapped war veterans for suitable employment. What these men may lack in normal physical facilities is more than

made up for by their courage, integrity, and the special skills for which they are trained.

Battle Creek is proud of these men and is proud to present to America from coast to coast the Nation's most popular radio forum and its well-known founder and moderator, Mr. George V. Denny, Jr. Mr. Denny. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Good evening, neighbors. Battle Creek has many things of which it can be proud. During the World Series, we shouldn't fail to mention the National Amateur Baseball Tournament, called the Little World Series, which is held here in Battle Creek. Indeed, we all know about Battle Creek as a food center, for there are few homes in America which do not have Battle Creek products on the pantry shelves.

Now, tonight, we turn our attention once again to the Number 1

international problem before this Nation and the world — Russian and American relations. Scarcely more than a year ago we were celebrating our joint victory over our common enemies in World War II. Today no responsible citizen is not concerned over the present state of Russian-American affairs.

Significantly enough the National Opinion Research Center of Denver, Colorado, has just completed a nationwide survey on the question: What do you think are some of the main disagreements at the present time between Russia and the United States?

I don't want to prejudice tonight's discussion by giving the results of this survey, but I understand they will be released to newspapers tomorrow, and our speakers may refer to them if they care to. The purpose of tonight's program is to find out, if we can, just what fundamental issues are causing this highly dangerous and volatile situation to exist.

Now, Major George Fielding Eliot, syndicated columnist of the *New York Herald Tribune* and author of a new book, *The Strength We Need*, has just returned from an extensive tour of Europe.

Robert St. John, foreign correspondent, author, and radio commentator, is one of the few eyewitnesses of the Nazis' drive down through the Balkans, and is a

recognized authority on the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

Our special interrogators, Howard Vincent O'Brien, popular author and columnist for the *Chicago Daily News*, and Frank Smother, chief editorial writer and columnist for the *Chicago Sun*, were both present at the San Francisco Conference and have followed Russian-American affairs as professional journalists. We are going to hear first from Mr. Robert St. John. Mr. St. John. (*Applause.*)

Mr. St. John:

Good evening. I'd like to begin by pointing out that the United States and the Soviet Union are two great land masses separated by six to eight thousand miles of space, two nations which are practically self-sufficient — about the only two nations in all the world that could go right on with their present way of life if cut off from the rest of mankind. That's one reason there should be no basic questions dividing us.

I don't think that there really are except in the minds of some people. Neither the Soviet Union nor the United States has any desire to carve out the old traditional kind of an empire. Neither of us goes in for the exploitation of native peoples. Neither of us is at present competing with the other for markets for our manufactured products. There is little competition between us for raw materials.

We are the two young dynamic, progressive nations of the world. We both in the past staged revolutions to get rid of a monarch. Both of us have an ideal of fair play for minorities.

There are a dozen reasons why we should understand each other and get along and be great allies in peace, as well as in war.

The word "impossible" isn't understood in either country. We, for example, did the impossible when we went into the recent war quite unprepared, and yet amazed the world with our miracle of production. In like manner, the Soviet Union did the impossible when it took nearly 200,000,000 people—82 per cent illiterate, people held back by superstition and ignorance—and in a mere 25 years made of them a modern, industrial nation wherein today a larger percentage can read and write than in almost any other country on the face of the globe.

Among the basic matters which some people say do actually divide us is the difference in our economic systems. But while it is still true that in the Soviet Union money cannot be made by the mere possession of money, as in the United States, otherwise our two systems are daily growing more alike, for in Russia they have abandoned the old Marxist idea of "from every man according to his ability, to every man according to his needs."

Today, in Russia, there is a wide range in salaries and wages. Of course, our range is somewhat greater, but we, too, have set limits, for we have placed a ceiling on income by our high income surtaxes, and a floor in the form of minimum wage laws.

Basic question Number 2, which people say divides us, is religion. In Old Russia, the church was a state church. It was all bound up with the Czarist regime the way a vine becomes entangled with a tree so that it was impossible to eliminate the one without eliminating the other.

However, a revitalized religion is now growing up in Russia. For example, on V-E Day more people knelt in prayer in the streets and flocked to churches to commune with their God in Moscow than in New York City.

Basic question Number 3 is the question of political freedom. It is true that there is a one-party system in Russia, while we, theoretically, can choose any men we wish to lead us. Yet in Connecticut just last month polls were taken which showed that among Democratic voters Chester Bowles was a 6-to-1 favorite for the Democratic nomination as Governor, but the nomination was denied him by the political organization controlling the Democratic State Convention reportedly because of a patronage matter.

Nevertheless, we do have in this country more political freedom at the higher levels. We can vote for all our officials. But the Russians argue they have political democracy at the lower levels, which we don't have; that in the Soviet Union, for example, teachers elect their principals, factory workers elect their foremen.

Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, those things are non-existent in Russia, as we know them. The Russians, of course, argue that all too frequently what we have is not freedom to tell the truth but license to distort the truth, that our freedom is principally freedom for the owners of great radio networks and newspaper chains, to tell the people what they want the people to hear.

The answer is that here in America anyone is free to start his own radio network or newspaper chain, if he can get the millions it would take.

In the United States, we are principally interested in what we call political democracy, while the Russians are principally interested in what they call economic democracy.

We would rather starve, if need be, and be free to speak our minds. The Russians say that they consider it much more important for a man to have a job, to have security, to have his economic freedom.

But basic as all such matters are, I don't think they ought to divide us or keep us from living at peace in the same world. The British drive their automobiles on the left-hand side of the road. I don't like to drive on the left-hand side of the road. I like our system of driving on the right. But does that mean that I must help wipe out every English city with atom bombs because I don't like their system?

About more current issues, we are disturbed primarily right now by Russia's expansion in Europe; her interference with the small nations along her western frontier; her suspicion of every move we make, her reluctance to let us see every move that she makes.

On the other hand, Russia is disturbed by our support, sometimes with men and war materials, of Fascist regimes in all parts of the world, in Greece, China, Indonesia. Russia is disturbed by our refusal to break with fascist Spain; our insistence on fascist Argentina being admitted to the United Nations; the use of our fleet to try to intimidate other nations; our military maneuvers, Muskox, Frostbite in the Arctic; the stockpiling of atom bombs; all our other military preparations.

Russia is disturbed by her suspicion that we are going to build Germany up again as a strong nation to serve as a buffer state between us and Russia.

Any one of these moves could touch off a war that would end all wars, for it would end civilization.

I still don't think there are any basic differences between us. The moves that each side has been making lately have been, all of them, primarily defensive moves. Russia looks to her western frontier, tries to get friendly regimes in countries like Rumania, Bulgaria, because she fears; she fears us. She fears an attempt of the western democracy to try to strangle her. Those things that we do which bother Russia are explained by our statesmen as defensive operations, too.

There are those who will try to prove to you that Russia is a menace because, they argue, she is trying to communize the world. Others will tell you that Britain is the villain because, they argue, even her Labor Government is more interested in the preservation of empire than anything else.

And there are those abroad who see us as the menace, because they see us as an arrogant, cocky, overgrown boy, armed with great piles of atom bombs, a tremendous Navy which we insist on using to intimidate various remote people, secret weapons, bases all over the world. They fear that we are out for world domination. Yet I honestly believe that what all three of us really want is security.

I'm sure that the peoples want peace. It's only sovereign nations

that ever want war. The ultimate solution, of course, will be a world state, an end to sovereign nations. But in the meantime, we and Russia, the two young giants, must stop eyeing with suspicion every move that the other makes.

With the energy we have, the ambition we have, the skills we have, if we only could close our ears to the chanting of those who would propagandize us into our own annihilation, then we could use this great strength that we have for good instead of for evil. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Robert St. John, and congratulations to you, too, on getting through that speech. Robert St. John came on here, a good trooper and a good soldier, because he didn't want to disappoint his audience, although he could hardly speak this morning, and has been under doctor's care all day long. We appreciate deeply what he's done here tonight and I'm sure that if he's got through that 8-minute speech, he can get through the question period. (*Applause.*)

Now we hear from a voice and a personality familiar to Town Meeting listeners, our syndicated columnist of the *New York Herald Tribune* and an author who's just returned from Europe, Major George Fielding Eliot. Major Eliot. (*Applause.*)

Major Eliot:

It's easy enough to say that America and Russia ought to get along better, or even that they must get along better if this world is ever to have a dependable peace. But the fact remains that the two nations are not getting along at all well. There must be a reason for it.

I'm quite willing to agree with Mr. St. John that the trouble doesn't lie in economics or religion. Nor do I think we should overemphasize the specific difficulties of which we've heard so much during the past year. Trieste, and the Dardanelles, Spain, and Iran, disputes over how to govern Germany and how to control atomic weapons—oh, we can cite a long list of troubles. All of them are important in themselves; but they are end effects, not causes of the division between Russia and America. They all, in fact, arise from one central cause, and they would all be settled quickly enough if that cause were removed.

This basic difficulty, the root of all the trouble, is the fact that the American people and the Russian people cannot freely associate and communicate with each other.

We Americans have not been without fault in dealing with some of the specific disputes I have mentioned; but this basic trouble is not our fault. It is wholly the fault of the present Soviet government.

I am convinced that the Russian people and the American people want peace. I am convinced that they would cooperate to that end if they were permitted to do so, if each people were sure that they had nothing to fear from the other.

I am convinced that the peace of the world would be safely established if we and the Russians would only get to know each other better. But this is presently impossible, and the reason for it is that the present Soviet Government will not permit it or is afraid to permit it.

The Soviet Government, like our own, is the creature of its history. It is young; it is only 29 years old. It lacks something of the perspective and the assurance of older systems. It was born amidst the utter chaos attending the dissolution of the former Czarist regime which ruled the Russian people for centuries.

But it is not the outgrowth of a popular revolution, as so many people seem to think. Instead, it is the result of a struggle for power within Russia and it represents the winners in that struggle or rather their immediate heirs.

It is not a people's government at all as we understand that term. It is a government of masters, not of servants. It is based on a ruling class, a tightly organized and strictly disciplined ruling class — the Communist Party.

This party makes up in power what it lacks in numbers. Actually, only about two per cent of the Russian people belong to it, for it is a selected party of hand-picked and carefully trained disciples.

This party monopolizes all public offices. It is responsible only to its own leaders. It is not responsible in any way to the people it rules. Its major decisions, which become the decisions of the Soviet Government, are made by a little group of nine men, the famous political bureau, or as it is sometimes called, the politburo.

Full mutual co-operation based on mutual confidence and mutual respect is not easily to be achieved between such a government as this and the American Government.

Our Government and its relations with the Russian Government is bound by the necessity of keeping within the limits set for it by American public opinion.

The Russian Government is under no such restraint. It can and does, to a very great extent, determine what the Russian people shall think. It controls every channel of public information. It has powers which enable it to dispose summarily of any open disagreement with its policies. It can and does deny people access to non-Russian sources of news and opinion.

It manufactures its own public opinion in accord with what nine

men decide is good for Russia or for themselves.

This little group of men, with a system which they control and represent, forms the major barrier between Russia and the western world. It is not that these men do not desire peace. It is rather that they are afraid of the conditions on which alone a lasting peace is possible. It is not that they are afraid of atomic bombs. They are afraid of comparisons.

The essential condition of peace is co-operation among the major powers. Co-operation must be based on mutual confidence—confidence that everyone is seeking the same end. In an atmosphere of such confidence, the adjustment of differences in detail becomes easily possible. If such confidence is lacking, every detail becomes an unsuperable difficulty.

But it is not possible for Americans to have confidence in Russia when every Russian purpose is veiled in mystery and when every Russian act is one of obstruction or aggression.

On the other hand, it is not possible for Russians to have confidence in Americans when the Russian Government makes itself the sole interpreter to its people of American purposes and motives and frequently distorts those purposes and motives in order to frighten the Russian people into continued support of their Government as their only salvation from

what is called onrushing capitalist domination.

Why? Why do they do this?

Because the Russian Government is afraid that the Russian people will begin to admire our ways of life, or at least to draw unfavorable comparisons. They fear in particular that unless they can keep their people mistrustful of us, they will have to answer a lot of questions, a lot of very awkward questions, as to why the Russian standard of living is not on a par with that of western nations.

They've already been profoundly shocked by the results of stories told by returning soldiers who found that Viennese workers had bathtubs in their flats and German farmers radios in their cottages.

If these doubts and questions are permitted to grow, inevitably they will bring about changes in the structure of the Russian state and the Russian social order. These changes may not be of immediate importance themselves, but if they go on they can be an entering wedge which conceivably could pry apart the foundation of the Soviet system as it now exists. That is, the system of absolute rule over the Russian people by a self-perpetuating ruling class.

The Russian leaders have discovered from actual experience that co-operation is not a one-way street. They must give as well as take. They thought they could

hold the world at arm's length and take as little or as much of co-operation as they chose, but they are finding out that this will not do. So they are resorting to a policy of simple obstructionism.

They fear the results of western recovery so they delay that recovery as much as they can by preventing any basic decisions from being taken in the field of world international relations.

If they can't have things their way, they prefer confusion. They strive always to bring decisions back to the Big Three or Big Four level, away from the larger international conferences which they distrust and detest.

This is not the way things are done in the Soviet Union, they think of these conferences. To participate in such gatherings is in itself a tacit admission of error, or so it seems to them. This applies particularly to those conferences where they must sit down as equals to smaller states such as in the General Assembly.

This attitude of the Soviet Government is the basic difficulty which divides America and Russia today. Can it be overcome? Only, I think, by time.

Meanwhile, we shall need a policy of patience and firmness—a policy based squarely on our American conceptions of human rights and human values.

We shall need to be very sure

that what we do squares always with our principles.

We shall need to maintain an unchallengeable military power so that no Russian leader will be tempted to see in war a way out of his difficulties.

We shall need, on the other hand, to avoid allowing our own minds to become set in a pattern of hostility toward the Russian people.

And we shall need to continue to assure them, in every way we can, of our desire to be their friends, to know them better, and to work with them for the establishment of that secure peace which both people so surely want and so desperately need. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Major Eliot. Now, I trust you gentlemen are prepared for our interrogators, so listen carefully to our first analyst who will be Howard Vincent O'Brien, widely popular author and columnist of the *Chicago Daily News*, whom we are proud to number among our Town Meeting listeners from the earliest days back in 1935. Welcome, Howard Vincent O'Brien. (*Applause.*)

Mr. O'Brien: These Town Meeting speakers are so uniformly learned that I usually find myself agreeing with the last one I hear. Tonight I agreed very largely with Major Eliot, although I don't go with him wholly in the amount of

blame for our difficulties that he ascribes to the Russians.

Most of my skepticism, however, is for Mr. St. John. First, as to his geography. He says we are 8,000 miles from Russia. I thought Bering Straits were narrower than that. Mr. St. John, how far is it from Alaska to Siberia? (*Laughter.*)

You say our vital differences with Russia are in the mind, but isn't that where all conflict begins? You say the Russians prefer economic security to freedom of speech, while we want it the other way. The Americans I know think they can have both!

Too lightly, I think, do you dismiss the conflict of ideas. The idea that a nation can't endure half slave and half free precipitated one of the bloodiest of wars.

You strike a tolerant balance between the defects of the Russian system and our own, notably as to freedom of the press. Only the very rich, you intimate, can start a periodical here. But the *Reader's Digest*, with some 12 to 16 million readers, was founded on a capital of \$800, mostly borrowed. And *Time* magazine was established by three boys with an idea and little else.

Mr. St. John feels that Americans control their Government hardly better than the Russians control theirs, but could this be because so few Americans ever vote at the primaries?

I'm sure that the Russians want war even less than we do. They've seen too much of it. There is hope, therefore, in Mr. St. John's

suggestion that as the Russians grow more capitalistic, we seem to be moving toward a modified collectivism. It may be on the scroll

THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT—One of the best known among military analysts either on the air or in the press is George Fielding Eliot. Major Eliot was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1894. After his graduation from Melbourne University in Australia, he served with the Australian Imperial Force from 1914 to 1918. From 1922 until 1930 he served as a captain and later as a major in the Military Intelligence Reserve of the United States Army. After five years as an accountant in Kansas City, Missouri, Major Eliot began writing for fiction magazines in 1926. Since 1928 he has written especially on military and international affairs and on military defense. At present he is military analyst for the *New York Herald Tribune* and for the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Major Eliot's books include *If War Comes*, *The Ramparts We Watch*, *Bombs Bursting in Air*, and *Hour of Triumph*.

ROBERT ST. JOHN—Mr. St. John was born in Chicago in 1902. At the age of 15, he joined the United States Navy. He soon returned to school, however, and was graduated from St. Albans School, Sycamore, Illinois, in 1920. The next two years, he was a student at Trinity College, in Hartford, Connecticut.

He worked for short intervals as a reporter for the *Hartford Courant*, *Oak Leaves* (Oak Park, Illinois), the *Chicago American* and the *Chicago Daily News*. From 1923 to 1926, with his brother, he owned and edited the *Cicero Tribune*, the *Berwyn Tribune*, and the *Riverside Times*, all in Illinois.

Mr. St. John went on to be managing editor of the *Rutland (Vt.) News* and city editor of the *Rutland Herald*. For a while he was on the staff of the *Camden (N.J.) Courier*; then cable editor of the *Philadelphia Record*. From 1931 to 1933 he was city editor for Associated Press in New York City.

In Barnstead, New Hampshire, Mr. St. John engaged in farming and free lance writing from 1933 until 1939. In 1939, he returned to the newspaper field as Balkan correspondent for Associated Press. In 1942, he became a news commentator for N.B.C. in London, in Washington in 1943, and in New York in 1944.

Mr. St. John is the author of *From the Land of Silent People* and *It's Always*

Tomorrow, as well as numerous magazine articles.

HOWARD VINCENT O'BRIEN—The author of many books and a columnist for the *Chicago Daily News*, Mr. O'Brien received wide acclaim for his editorial "Goodbye, Son," printed when his son, later killed in action, left for war.

Mr. O'Brien was born in Chicago in 1888. He received a B.A. degree from Yale in 1910. He joined the editorial staff of *Printers' Ink* in 1911. That year he also founded the magazine *Art* and served as its editor for three years. In 1941, his book *New Men for Old* was published and in 1914, his book *Thirty*.

From 1917 to 1919, Mr. O'Brien was a First Lieutenant in the Field Artillery with the American Expeditionary Forces. He has been a member of the David C. Thomas Company (advertising) and the Buchen Company in Chicago. From 1928 to 1932, Mr. O'Brien was literary editor of the *Chicago Daily News* and since then has been a columnist for that paper.

In addition to the books written before World War I, Mr. O'Brien is also the author of *Trodden Gold*, *The Terms of Conquest*, *The Thunderbolt*, *The Green Scarf*, *What a Man Wants*, *Wine, Women, and War*, *P.S., Four and Twenty Blackbirds*, *An Abandoned Woman*, *Folding Bedouins*, *Notes for a Book About Mexico*, and *Members of a Guinea Pig*.

FRANK ALBERT SMOTHERS — Born in Rossville, Illinois, in 1901, Mr. Smothers studied at Northwestern University and at the University of Wisconsin. He began his newspaper career on the editorial staff of the *Evanston (Ill.) News Index*. After that he worked for the *Kansas City Star*, for the United Press, and for the *Chicago Daily News*. On the *Daily News*, he was a reporter from 1925 until 1933, a correspondent in China in 1934, in China, Manchuria, and Japan from 1935 to 1937, in Italy in 1937-38. He covered the Palestine strife in the summer of 1938 and was expelled from Italy in November, 1938, by the Fascist Government for "unfriendly" dispatches. He also served as a correspondent in Tunis, Catalonia, France, England, the Balkans, Warsaw, Danzig, Berlin, Holland, and elsewhere. Mr. Smothers is now chief editorial writer for the *Chicago Sun*.

of destiny that one day we shall meet on the stairs and together lead the world toward civilization. (*Applause.*)

Now, Mr. St. John, I want to ask you a question. The question is, "What is the purpose of the Communist Party in the United States? Is it Russian or American? Who supports it? To whom does it give allegiance? And is it a coincidence that its policies seem always to agree with those of Moscow?"

Mr. Denny: Sounds like a 24-barrel shotgun!

Mr. St. John: That's one of those questions, Mr. Denny, like, "Mr. St. John, have you stopped beating your wife?" Now, Mr. O'Brien, you're not going to trap me into answering that one. I am not here defending, or apologizing, for the Communist Party of the United States. I'm not a bit interested in the Communist Party of the United States, which, according to the latest reports, or rather, according to the number of votes polled in 1940, had 46,000 members. I'm not a bit interested in them.

I am interested in the Communist Party of Russia, because we've got to live in the same world with that Party. I don't know anything about who the Communist Party of America is responsible for. I really don't care much about them. I'm going to dodge that question on that ground, Mr. O'Brien. I'm not

going to be pulled into that one.

Mr. O'Brien: Well, Mr. St. John, that sounded like a trick question in an effort to trap you, but believe it or not, I asked it out of curiosity. I would really like to know. So, we will pass up that question.

Mr. Denny: Do you want to ask Major Eliot to tackle that question? I think a lot of people would like to know the answer to it. (*Applause.*)

Major Eliot: Well, I'm not coming up here with any idea of giving an answer to that one. I've been struck by the same coincidence which was particularly noticeable about the time that the Germans invaded Russia. Two days before then, the Communists were all denouncing capitalistic and imperialistic war, and the day afterwards, boy, they were certainly down on the Germans, but then, there you are. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: So you pays your money and you takes your choice. All right, Mr. O'Brien.

Mr. O'Brien: Yes, and this is another request for information. This is for both Major Eliot and Mr. St. John. It's about John Strohm, and as an explanation for those of you who have been too preoccupied with Red Birds and Red Sox to concern yourselves with Red Russia, I will explain that John Strohm is a writer on agricultural topics who yearned to visit Russia.

After waiting six months for a visa, he decided that a straight line was the shortest distance between points and he cabled Stalin. There was a prompt answer. It said in effect, "Come on over, and bring your Kodak." So Mr. Strohm went—cameras and all. He covered 4,000 miles without interference or restraint of any sort. He snapped pictures at will, apparently, even in the Moscow airport, and none of his dispatches have been censored. The fourth of his articles appears in the American press today.

The question is, "What lies behind this sudden lifting of the Iron Curtain?"

Mr. Denny: Major Eliot, do you want to take that one first?

Major Eliot: Oh, I don't think that's particularly a lifting of the Iron Curtain, except in a particular instance. There have been other instances in which individual correspondents have gone around in Russia, somewhat.

I haven't had a chance to read all of Mr. Strohm's articles but I have glanced through two or three of them and apparently they are chiefly concerned with Russian people—people he saw and talked to in various walks of life. He takes a very sympathetic view of these people, and so do I. I think the Russian people are all right.

I haven't heard that Mr. Strohm has been in the Kremlin where, I think, the characters who are re-

sponsible for all the trouble are to be found.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Mr. St. John.

Mr. St. John: I think we are begging the question when we use the expression "Iron Curtain." We, Americans, fall for catch phrases so quickly and so easily. Let's first prove that there is an Iron Curtain.

I have a great many friends—correspondent, American correspondents—who have wandered very freely around Russia and have written very freely. There's John Scott of *Time* magazine; Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times* came back and wrote columns and columns, days after days, of his observations over there. We have many good American correspondents—Lee White of the *Chicago Daily News* represented by one of the gentlemen on the platform here. I question the use of the words "Iron Curtain." It's a catch phrase that is poisoning a lot of people's minds, I think. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Major Eliot?

Major Eliot: I would just like to give Mr. St. John an instance. He mentioned John Scott of *Time* magazine. About two months ago I was in Berlin. I was in one of the offices of American Military Government. A discussion was going on with regard to Mr. Scott of *Time* magazine. It seems that

Mr. Scott had applied for permission, not to enter Russia, but to enter merely the Soviet Zone of Germany where under the Four-Power Agreement, American correspondents are supposed to circulate freely. The Soviet representatives had said that they were terribly sorry but Mr. Scott had written unfavorable articles about them and they did not wish to see Mr. Scott in the Soviet Zone in Germany. So there's your Iron Curtain. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Well, now, we've got to get this other interrogator in here with his stiletto which he is sharpening up for Major Eliot. Now, we hear from the distinguished journalist, chief editorial writer and columnist for the *Chicago Sun*, Mr. Frank Smothers. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Smothers: Mr. St. John and Major Eliot agree on one proposition—that the main thing we have to fear is fear itself. I agree with that, too. But they are far from agreed on how to combat that fear. Major Eliot believes that all the troubles between America and Russia, today, spring fundamentally from the inability of our two peoples to associate freely with each other.

Now, there is a lot in that. Yet seeing a lot of each other did not prevent peoples marching against each other in many wars; for example, our Revolutionary and Civil Wars. We knew each other in

those days, yet we fought—and World Wars I and II.

Closer association of peoples, however, certainly will help. I agree with Major Eliot on that. It will help if and only if we genuinely try to understand each other including our mutual fears.

Yet Major Eliot finds that Russo-American enstrangement of peoples is and I quote, "wholly the fault of the present Soviet Government."

Now, my friends, that is a convenient theory but it does not answer the facts. Does it not, in effect, absolve us Americans from even trying to do anything to improve relations?

Soviet fear and isolationism, as a matter of fact, have many causes, some dating far back in history. But they also spring from such facts as the intervention of the western powers on Russia's soil in an attempt to break the revolution after World War I.

Russia's fear today is fed, moreover, by the effective, if tentative, practice of an Anglo-American alliance in world affairs—informal though it is—a practice which reverses for America Franklin Roosevelt's great role of world mediator.

Russian fear, we cannot doubt, is also affected by such military fact as our atomic monopoly, our unprecedented 13 billion dollar peacetime military budget, our development of bases thousands of miles from our shores, and the

seeming readiness, my friends, of our Government to support reaction against our real American principles, to support reaction around the world whether it be behind the fascist King of Greece or the oligarchy of Japan, if we think, thereby, that we can do something to stop Russia through using such peoples.

Russia feeds our fears too. Let there be no mistake about that. She does so, for example, by unilateralism in Eastern Europe. She has scant regard, as yet, in this period of her history, for our concept of civil liberties, which we rightly hold high. She feeds our concern by excessive reparations demands, by excessive use of the veto, by her unbending brittle stands in the United Nations.

But she wants security. There is no proof, whatsoever, that any of the moves she has taken is actuated by any other motive basically.

Fear can make tyrants of any of us. Fear can betray any of us into a wrong effort and wrong ways of trying to build security. But that does not prove that the purpose is otherwise.

We Americans ought to remember this one central fact: that we are by all odds the most powerful, the strongest people in the world. That gives us a special responsibility to lead for peace and to combat the bases of fear and not

simply to say it's all Russia's fault and we need not change.

I should like to ask my friend Major Eliot, if I may, whether in his opinion it is only Russia that needs to make any basic change in foreign policy today in her approach to us, or whether it is now time for the United States of America, as well, to approach Russia in a new spirit and with a new approach.

Major Eliot: I'm perfectly willing, Mr. Smothers, to see anything done by the American Government. I would be wholeheartedly in favor of any useful new approach. But it seems to me that there's a difference between the idea of a new approach and new concessions to the Russians in the hope of winning their favor. The only kind of new approach that they seem to want in the international conferences, of which I have any knowledge, is some new concession.

Yesterday, I think it was, or the day before—I'm out of town so much I get my chronology mixed up—they took the very adamant position on the question of Trieste, on the boundary between Italy and Yugoslavia, and the question of the Constitution of the Free Territory of Trieste.

We can't go on forever giving in everywhere to Soviet demands and if that is the only new approach that is appreciated, then I'm against it. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Mr. Smothers?

Mr. Smothers: Earlier I understood Major Eliot to say that such issues as Trieste were rather details, and that they were not basic causes of division. I do not think that we've had a clear answer to the question of whether it is necessary for us to take a new approach to Russia—whether it is all Russia's fault, whether there are not changes that we need to make in order to decrease her fear of us.

Right in connection with that I should like Major Eliot to tell me, in connection with his remark, the one on our means to security, as I saw it, the basic keynote with which he concluded, was that we must maintain unchallengeable military strength. I should like to ask him whether if that is the way our strongest of all nations is to set the pace, if that is to be our central keynote—and I'm for defense, too—but if that is to be our central keynote, how is he going to end the armaments race that inevitably will follow and lead finally to war? (*Applause.*)

Major Eliot: Of course, Mr. Smothers, I didn't make that my central keynote. I said that was one of the things that it seemed to me that we had to do, for the time being, in a world in which, unfortunately, force is still an extremely important factor. Maybe someday we can substitute for that kind of force, for that kind of

armed security, the only security which individuals, or communities, or nations have ever been able to substitute for security by our own power, and that is security under an agreed law.

Until we can do that, there is nothing for us to do except to be secure against any attempt by anyone to upset the peace of the world either locally or in a greater effort. I don't suppose the Russians are ready for that sort of thing now. I don't believe they are. I think they want peace. But nobody knows what the future is going to bring. Certainly the cause of peace will not be advanced by a weak America. We've been all through that. We've learned two bitter lessons in that. It's about time we got that one through our heads. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Major Eliot. Well, this is an extremely interesting and provocative discussion but I see the audience is getting restless because they want to get in on this discussion so suppose you gentlemen relax for a moment while we pause briefly for station identification.

Announcer: You are listening to America's Town Meeting of the Air, coming to you from the Kellogg Auditorium in Battle Creek, Michigan, where we are the guests of the World-At-Our-Door Committee and Station WELL.

We are discussing the subject, "What Basic Questions Divide the

United States and Russia?" We have just heard statements by our speakers and the moderator is about to take questions from the audience.

If you would like a complete copy of tonight's discussion, send your request to Town Hall, New York 18, New York, and enclose 10 cents to cover the cost of

printing and mailing. If you would like to have these *Town Meeting Bulletins* come to you regularly, enclose one dollar for 11 weeks, \$2.35 for six months, or \$4.50 for an entire year. Remember the address, Town Hall, New York 18, New York. Please print your name and address clearly and allow at least two weeks for delivery.

QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

Mr. Denny: To encourage good questions, Town Hall is offering a \$25 United States Savings Bond for the question which, in the opinion of our committee of judges, is considered best for bringing out facts and broadening the scope of tonight's discussion.

All questions must be limited to 25 words and the decision of our judges is final. If they do not consider that any of the questions measures up to these qualifications, they'll make no award.

We'll start with the gentleman over there near the front. Yes sir.

Man: My question is directed to Mr. St. John. Do you think Russia shows good faith in world relationship by continued censorship of information to and from her own country and her satellites?

Mr. St. John: No, I do not think she does. I do not, as a journalist, as a foreign correspondent, like very much censorship of any kind. I don't like, I didn't

like, I fought British censorship in Cairo, which was the worst censorship I have ever encountered anywhere, and I think worse than any my colleagues have ever encountered anywhere.

That still does not excuse Russian censorship. I do not like it, I do not approve of it, I do not think it does encourage good relations. Neither did I approve of the fact that General MacArthur didn't allow any Russian correspondents in Japan for many, many months. He not only censored them, but didn't even allow them in Japan.

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Mr. St. John. The gentleman on the aisle toward the back. Yes sir.

Man: My question is directed to Major Eliot. Is there any reason to hope for a more liberal government in Russia by way of a revolution?

Major Eliot: No, sir, I don't think there is any possibility in

the immediate future of a revolution in Russia. The government is too well organized for that. It is too well served by its secret police to allow revolutions to get under way. I do think that changes in the Russian Government or the Russian social system may come about from below by a long and gradual process, not by revolution, or they may come about by new blood at the top. You remember that the nine members of the politburo have been in office on an average of just over 15 years and must soon be replaced—some of them—by new men.

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Major Eliot. The gentleman way in the back there.

Man: Mr. O'Brien. My name is Reilly, and I'm a patient at the Percy Jones Hospital.

Mr. Denny: Just a couple of Irishmen. Come on. (*Laughter.*)

Man: You say we will, in time, meet the Russians. How long will it take the 400,000,000 Russians, speaking many languages, to understand our culture at this meeting?

Mr. O'Brien: Well, I'm really embarrassed at the question because I don't speak any Russian and I've never been in Russia, and none of the books I have ever read agreed, so I don't know how long it will take the Russians to appreciate our culture, or how long it will take us to appreciate theirs. I only

hope it comes before worse trouble does.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. He was stumped almost as much as Robert St. John by that question. All right, the gentleman down front here. Yes?

Man: Is it not true that any religious freedom in Russia today is, or was, a matter of convenience to gain our support during the war?

Mr. St. John: Oh, I don't think that's a fair way to put it. Then anything good from our point of view that Russia does from now on we're simply going to say that she did it to try to lick our boots. No, I don't think that's true at all.

The church in Russia has been given a place in Russian society now—now that it is no longer tied up with the old regime. If you know people like the Russians, you know that it would be absolutely impossible, if anyone wanted to, to kill their spirituality. Their religion is something deep down within them. The church itself, the evils of the system—the ecclesiastical system—is something else, but any Russian leader who tried to kill the spirituality of his people would be a terrible fool and wouldn't know the Russian people very well.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The young man way up in the balcony. The one with the plaid shirt.

Man: Major Eliot said that we must have military power. Don't

you think that military power is the basis of all fear and that Russia is afraid of us for our military power?

Major Eliot: No, sir, I do not. As I said in my main address, I think the Russians are chiefly afraid of economic comparisons. I don't think that any Russian, or any Russian leader who has any knowledge at all of affairs, certainly not those who have had a chance to be outside of Russia, thinks that the United States is about to attack Russia or to make war on them. I think they're afraid of growing comparison with the standard of life that will grow up on the west side of—Mr. St. John doesn't like the term—"the Iron Curtain," well, let's say the barrier that is drawn across Europe through which you can't get without a Soviet visa. (*Laughter and applause.*)

Mr. Denny: The lady down in the second row. We really ought to have a picture of that hat. (*Laughter.*) Tom Brenneman would like a picture of that. Your question, please?

Lady: Mr. Smothers. Why should Russia fear us so, considering that we furnished considerable arms—armed them to the teeth—for this last war?

Mr. Smothers: I think that the Russians unquestionably appreciate, and rightly, the aid that we gave to them so that they could do their fighting for a common

victory, but I think that your question hardly answers the basic riddle of what makes us fear each other.

What we did for Russia in the past in the way of helping them to fight on our side is no assurance for our friendship in the future. If that were the case, then we could dismiss all of our concern over Russia on the ground that millions of Russians died in a common struggle with us.

I hardly see that it follows, but I will say this, that the aid that we did give, the fight that we did fight side by side with the Russians, is one of the foundations on which we can and ought to build in getting back to more of the same kind of cooperation that was practiced during the war.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The lady down here.

Lady: Mr. St. John. Isn't the communistic idea to extend all over the world, to convert all over the world, rather than to keep it in Russia?

Mr. St. John: There were two conflicting schools of thought in Russia. One was led by Trotsky, one was led by Stalin. The Trotskyites believed in the theory that a communist Russia could not exist in a capitalist world, therefore they must go out and their first job was to communize the world.

The Stalin group believed just the opposite—that if they could make communism succeed in their

own country, that they would be all right. There was a terrible conflict—you aren't old enough to remember it, probably. There was a terrible conflict between those two groups. The Stalin group won. The Trotsky group had to flee the country — Trotsky ultimately was killed for another reason in Mexico — but the Stalin group won, the group that said we believe that we do not need to communize the world if we just make the experiment succeed within our own frontiers.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Mr. O'Brien has a question.

Mr. O'Brien: Well, I'd just like to ask Mr. St. John, Trotsky is dead but the communists seem to be still quite alive.

Mr. St. John: Well, it's one thing to say there is some Communists active in Mexico, New York, San Francisco, and some other places, but it's another thing to say that they are carrying out the policy of the Communist organization in Moscow.

After all, Stalin can't help it if Earl Browder wants to make a Communist speech in New York. I don't even know whether he cares one way or the other. Maybe it rather pleases him to have some Communist Parties spring up here and there. No doubt it does, just as it pleases Methodists to see some Chinese getting converted to the Methodist religion. Just as we would be

quite happy if the Argentinians, for example, suddenly became democratic instead of fascist. But it's another thing to say that we or Russia have set up an organization for world revolution or world conversion.

Major Eliot: That's all very well, but isn't it true that the Russians make use of Communist Parties in many other countries, for instance, in an area with which Mr. St. John is extremely familiar in Hungary, Rumania, in Bulgaria, and in Poland. The Russians make use of Communist minorities, and very small minorities at that, to run those countries in their own favor. In the Soviet Zone of Germany, they brought about a shotgun wedding between the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party whereupon the Communists took over all the offices in the combined union of which they had about ten per cent of the total membership, in order to carry out Russian views there.

Mr. Denny: Well, Major, you have got both these men up on their feet. Mr. Smothers?

Mr. Smothers: I decry, just as much, I think, as any one on the platform including Major Eliot, any use that the Russians make of their own select parties to push the contest with us. I want a healthier contest all the way around in which we don't play that game. But let's not be too sanctimonious.

APR 30

I want to ask Major Eliot whether he believes that the Anglo-American side is making any use of a King by the name of George in Greece. I should like him to tell me whether or not he is satisfied with our protection of the oligarchy of Japan, our siding to date with an actual armed intervention in China on the side of the right-wing Kuomintang there, and I should like to ask him whether he believes that in the Philippines our lining up with the former collaborationist with Japan, General Roxas, is a happy ending to our Philippine adventure. (*Applause.*)

Major Eliot: Frank, I think you've given me a long list of questions there. I'm not sure I can remember them all. I think we've backed a pretty bad horse in Greece and I'm not too proud of that one, but after all, if we hadn't backed that horse, we would have had the Russians or their Bulgarian and Albanian stooges in backing their horse. So that's one of those things where one had to make a virtue of necessity.

In China, after all there were two things we could do—there were three things we could do. We could back the Communists, we could back Chiang Kai-Shek, or we could try to bring about a composition between them and bring about peace. Well, that's what we tried to do.

It's another thing to say, per-

haps, that we didn't do it very well, but we sent out George Marshall who is, in my mind, the greatest man that was produced by this war, in any country anywhere, and he made an awfully good try of it. Maybe the problem is insoluble.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. We have time for one more question. The gentleman in the middle of the hall there.

Man: Major Eliot. Since Mr. Strohman was allowed by Stalin to go unmolested all through the miles of Russia and take pictures and find out their ways of life, and since we think that peoples knowing each other is the solution of our problem with Russia, why not send off some more Strohms?

Major Eliot: Well, I am all for that. If Mr. Stalin would allow as many American correspondents to go to Russia under the same circumstances as would desire to go if the permission were given, then I would raise a loud cheer and I would say that here, at last, we had a Russian act which did indeed point the way toward better relations. But perhaps, sir, you have not recently applied for a Soviet visa because I know a large number of American newspaper men who have applied for them and they have not all been treated with the same courtesy and consideration which were shown Mr. Strohman. I wish to see the day when they all would be.

Mr. Denny: I wouldn't be at all surprised, Major Eliot, to find that Mr. Stalin's desk is piled high with telegrams from American correspondents asking to be favored as Mr. Strohm was favored. I want to thank you all. Now, while Major Eliot and Mr. St. John prepare their summaries of tonight's question, here is the news of next week's program.

Announcer: Next week your Town Meeting will originate in Akron, Ohio, where we will be the guests of WAKR and a special Town Meeting host committee. Our subject will be, "Is Our American Press Really Free?"

Our speakers will be Mr. Morris Ernst, well-known New York attorney and author of *The First Freedom*; and Mr. Erwin Canham, managing editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*.

As interrogators we will have Michael Straight, veteran and journalist, and "Tex" McCrary, popular editor and radio commentator. Now for the summaries of tonight's question, "What Basic Questions Divide Russia and the United States?" here is our moderator, Mr. Denny.

Mr. Denny: And here is George Fielding Eliot with his summary of tonight's discussion.

Major Eliot: Well, I think we're all agreed, all four of us on this platform, and certainly our moderator, that we want peace. We want the establishment of a just,

endurable, and lasting peace in this world. I think we're all agreed that the reason we don't have that peace is because of fear, because of mistrust, because basically the American and Russian people do not trust each other.

My position is that the reason they don't trust each other is because they don't have an opportunity of knowing each other. That was why I was so glad to hear the question from the gentlemen in the middle of the hall about Mr. Strohm. If all of these Strohm's could go over—one thousand, ten thousand—could go and wander around in Russia and talk with anyone they wanted to and take pictures and find out how things are going over there, and if ten thousand or a hundred thousand Russian Strohm's could come over here with rucksacks on their backs and cameras in their hands and wander around and get to know us without any NKVD people following them around to see what they were doing, that would be a wonderful thing. That would really be the beginning of a secure foundation for peace in this world.

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Major Eliot. Now for a final word on the other side of the case from Mr. Robert St. John.

Mr. St. John: Speaking for my ally, Frank Smothers, and for myself, and perhaps for our two colleagues too, man has learned to write, and man has learned to fly

APR 30 1947

—to fly faster than the speed of sound. Man has learned to split an atom. Man has learned to kill —to kill 100,000 people and obliterate an entire city in the time it takes a chunk of steel to fall from a plane down to the earth.

Man now is at the crossroads of his destiny. Man must now quickly learn to live with man. The test case is now in our hands.

Can we learn to live on the same planet with a race of men called Russians?

We think that we can, but if we're wrong—if we're wrong, we shall not have to worry about paying the lost bet, for if we can't, it will be the end. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Mr. St. John, Major Eliot, Howard Vincent O'Brien, and Frank Smothers. We cannot escape our responsibility for having an enlightened

opinion on this question, and we thank you all for throwing more light on this major problem.

Again, I want to ask our Town Meeting discussion groups to let us hear from them. We are trying to complete a survey of just how many of these groups are active now, so if you have a Town Meeting discussion group in your home, club, school, church, or anywhere, let us hear from you at Town Hall, New York 18, New York. We may be able to help you.

Now, our committee of judges informs me that tonight's winning question is, by unanimous decision, "Isn't the Communist idea to extend all over the world to convert the world, rather than to keep it in Russia?" This question was asked by Mrs. Henry M. Bacon, Battle Creek, Mich., housewife. Congratulations, Mrs. Bacon. (*Applause.*)

Statement of the ownership, management, etc., required by the Acts of Congress of Aug. 24, 1912, and Mar. 3, 1933, of the Town Meeting Bulletin, published weekly at Columbus, Ohio, for October 1, 1946. State of New York, County of Westchester, ss. Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Wm. Steinhoff, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of Town Meeting, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, to-wit: (1) That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, and business manager are: Publisher, The Town Hall, Inc., 113-123 West 43rd Street, N.Y. 18, N.Y.; Editor, Evelyn Graham, 32 So. Fourth St., Columbus, Ohio; Business Manager, William Steinhoff, 113-123 West 43rd St., New York 18, N.Y. (2) That the owner is: The Town Hall, Inc., 113-123 West 43rd Street, New York 18, N.Y. No stockholders. (3) That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or

more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None. (4) That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. (Signed) William Steinhoff, business manager. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 16th day of September, 1946. (Signed) Helen Wilkins. (My commission expires March 30, 1947.)